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Security Council

Fiftieth Year

Provisional

3602nd Meeting

Thursday, 30 November 1995, 12.45 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Al-Khussaiby	(Oman)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cárdenas
	Botswana	Mr. Legwaila
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Czech Republic	Mr. Kovanda
	France	Mr. Legal
	Germany	Mr. Eitel
	Honduras	Mr. Martínez Blanco
	Indonesia	Mr. Wibisono
	Italy	Mr. Fulci
	Nigeria	Mr. Egunsola
	Russian Federation	Mr. Fedotov
	Rwanda	Mr. Ubalijoro
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

The situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolutions 981 (1995), 982 (1995) and 983 (1995)

95-86880 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 12.45 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolutions 981 (1995), 982 (1995) and 983 (1995)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Maleski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) took a place at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolutions 981 (1995), 982 (1995) and 983 (1995), document S/1995/987.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1995/996, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Argentina, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

Honduras has joined as a sponsor of the draft resolution contained in document S/1995/996.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Botswana, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Nigeria, Oman, Russian Federation, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1027 (1995).

The representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has asked to speak, and I now call on him.

Mr. Maleski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): It has been said that the Balkan States, throughout history, have not been able to relate to one another in a mature and peaceful manner. But if the new States overcome the deficiencies of the former federation — lack of inner cohesion and effective democratic government — the will to cooperate can become stronger than the will to fight. That is why, with the end of this Balkan war, democracy, tolerance, pluralism and cooperation are becoming the main "security" issues of all the countries in the region. These goals will not be easily achieved, because, in its deepest sense, democracy is a state of mind of the individual, and we can only imagine what the state of mind of peoples who have fought for almost four years is today.

During these years the Republic of Macedonia has been walking a difficult and dangerous road in Balkan and international politics. Our aim has been the survival of our society, the preservation of our national identity and the dignity of our people.

Even before this last Balkan-war tragedy began to unfold, my country called upon the members of the former Yugoslav federation to demonstrate restraint and moderation and to avoid war. But when the forces of armed conflict, fuelled by aggressive nationalism, won, the Republic of Macedonia refused to be held hostage to a situation that was out of our control and in total contradiction to our principles.

My Government gave its full support to the efforts of the European Union to mediate a peaceful and orderly dissolution of the federation. We cooperated with the Union's Arbitration Commission, consisting of five Presidents of constitutional courts of its member States. The Badinter Commission, as it is known, after inspecting the cases of the six former Republics, concluded that only two — one being the Republic of Macedonia — fulfilled the conditions to be recognized as independent States. However, due to the opposition of one member State of the Union, which did not like the decision of its own Arbitration Commission, my country was not recognized. In spite of this, we held to our policy of peaceful self-determination, with justice and law on our side, but also with a new awareness that we live in a world where might often makes right and where interests often stand taller than principles. On the other hand, that awareness has made us especially grateful to all the countries, including members of the European Union, that found ways to support us in our struggle for survival.

The United Nations became our next goal and our hope. We presented our case to the Members of the Organization, and, after a period of time, which to us seemed like eternity, we received the support of the United Nations and became a Member. However, under a very peculiar formula — one that you, Mr. President, found difficulty in uttering when inviting me to the table today — we were to be addressed as "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", the reason again being that one Member objected to our name. In ancient times, peoples in our part of the world had this saying:

"Call me a jar if you wish, but do not break me."

But we are living in a different world today, and peoples refuse to be treated as jars. They have respect for their feelings, their dignity and their human rights, and they demand the same from others. All this having been accepted with stoicism, an economic blockade having been survived and an agreement having been signed, a process of cooperation and better understanding has just begun between our two nations. We hope that in time our neighbour will understand that the only case in which a smaller country poses a threat to a bigger neighbour is when it is not allowed to develop freely.

The end of the war in the Balkans is the first step towards creating a region of peace, cooperation and stability. The Republic of Macedonia considers the achievement of this goal to be its duty. It is also our duty to learn from what has just happened. Some of the lessons we have learned are as follows.

The lesson we have learned is that peoples of the Balkans should think hard before casting their votes for politicians who suffer from malignant nationalism and are ready to push them to war. Politics being what it is, a domain of human activity where emotions, interests and power often dominate over reason, the peoples of the region must make significant efforts so that future mistakes can be avoided.

The lesson we have learned is that the European Union, a regional organization of which the Republic of Macedonia aspires to be a member, still lacks a common will when resolving crisis situations on the continent. Building a common foreign policy out of conflicting national interests will be a slow and long process in Europe.

The lesson we have learned is that the United States cannot back away from leadership, for if the leading Power does not lead, others cannot follow. It has been well said that all nations may be in the same leaky boat, but one of them wields the biggest dipper.

The lesson we have learned is that the United Nations must clearly define its role in a conflict in accordance with its potential, and that we should all work towards the strengthening of our Organization, a brilliant achievement of humanity. The fact that we representatives of all the States in the world sit under one roof speaks of this achievement. What we do under that roof — how we work, what our priorities are, whether we get lost in unnecessary details and protocol, whether we address the real problems at the right time — is something that we should debate in an effort to change. But it is under this roof that a very valuable aim of humanity is being achieved: the creation of a sense of the common responsibility of each individual State for the planet Earth and its peoples.

The lesson we have learned, once more, is that the weak lead a perilous life in this world, that small States operate on narrow margins, and that the mistakes they make can have fatal results. In contrast, strong States can afford to make mistakes, to react slowly and to wait for the ambiguity of events to be resolved. That is why self-help remains one of the basic principles of international politics, in spite of the existence of collective forms of help.

The lesson we have learned is that the peacemakers live difficult and dangerous lives, but that in spite of that fact the struggle for peace is universal. Let me illustrate this with a true story. On 3 October an attempt was made on the life of the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov. The man who, amidst a horrible ethnic war, led his people peacefully to statehood, was almost killed. A political leader from another country, who shared the same goals, sent a letter to our wounded President in which he expressed his deep shock at the news of the terrorist attack. The letter, one of the last he wrote, was from the Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin.

At the beginning of this century, in 1912 and 1913, two Balkan wars were fought. In the first, the Balkan States fought against the Ottoman Empire; in the second, they fought among themselves for the division of Macedonia. The extreme savagery of that war, with many atrocities against the civilian population and prisoners of war, and with the burning of cities, churches and mosques, was recorded in a report by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. That report could well have been written today. The members of the International Commission of Inquiry, representing all the major countries of the world, visited the Balkans after the war was over in order to understand what had really happened. They were shocked by the fact that the war had been waged not by armies, but by the nations themselves, to

> "the complete extermination of an alien population,"

and were bewildered by the fact that

> "such things ... can have occurred in the twentieth century".

Little did they know that the next Balkan crisis, just months later in Bosnia, in 1914, would lead to the implosion of the European order and to atrocities among the civilized people of the continent, in a long, bloody war known as the First World War.

The point I am trying to make is that it is just as dangerous today as it was at the beginning of the century to turn a blind eye to Balkan events. The continued festering of the Bosnian wound has already caused similar symptoms in neighbouring countries and in Europe as a whole. On the economic side of the problem, the fact that there is a war in the region and an international embargo has triggered black-market activity. This has contributed to the decline of the rule of law through the spread of criminal activities, which undermine fragile democratic systems. Countries of Western Europe are also involved, because goods very often either originate from there or they are their recipients. On the political side, we notice elements of nineteenth-century power politics splitting the European Union according to its members' support for one or another State of the former federation. This, in turn, could destroy its integration and break up its military North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance.

That is why the decision of the United States Government to lead in an effort to heal the wounds of the war is an act of wisdom and is of tremendous importance for peace and stability in Europe and throughout the world. Whether the initiative will result in a lasting peace, on the other hand, depends on many factors, especially the readiness of the peoples of the region to dedicate themselves to peace. The presence of foreign military forces cannot be a substitute for the efforts of the Balkan peoples. It is up to them to build their democratic, political, economic and cultural values and systems, as part of a civilization based on democracy and human rights.

The Secretary-General's report pays special attention to the minority question in the Republic of Macedonia. Allow me to say a few words on that subject.

We in the Republic of Macedonia are in the process of building a democratic order that reflects the character of our society. Like any other Eastern European country, we have problems both with democracy and with order. Aware of the fact that the centripetal tendencies unleashed by the ethnic wars to the north do not necessarily stop on our borders, we have worked hard with our minorities to prevent the same scenario. The Macedonian majority is becoming aware of the fact that minority rights, which integrate minorities in Macedonian society, strengthen our State. The minorities are becoming aware of the fact that loyalty, in words and deeds, to the State of Macedonia is what is expected of them in return. Through this process of give and take we hope to cross ethnic barriers that sometimes divide us. This will be a slow process that demands moderation, restraint and tolerance on the part of all the political participants. It will be a process in which the fears both of the minorities and of the majority will have to be addressed through the institutions of the system.

I would like the members of the Security Council to take note of the fact that this approach towards the rights of minorities, unparalleled in the region where we live,

is being taken by Macedonians, a people whose national identity is still being denied in some Balkan countries.

Allow me to state the position of my Government concerning the mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in the Republic of Macedonia. My Government considers, as it has stated on various occasions, that UNPREDEP should become a completely independent United Nations operation reporting directly to the Secretary-General. And we raise the question of locating its base, its military command and its logistics structure in Skopje. My Government furthermore requests that the mandate of UNPREDEP be extended for a period terminating on 30 November 1996. Also, my Government pays tribute to UNPREDEP troop-contributing countries — the United States of America, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway — for their outstanding efforts in performing their duties.

Allow me to conclude with one final remark. We can consider ourselves lucky to live in an era when powerful States speak the language of peace, tolerance and democracy. It has not always been so in history. But there is no guarantee that in the future all powerful States will always define their policies with wisdom and apply force with caution. That is why small States, in the Balkans and elsewhere in the world, must take advantage of this unique historic opportunity to share the global burden of building a world based on democracy, law and justice.

The President: There are no further speakers on the list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.